

these countries and convert their way of economy to more of the Chinese system.

The Three Seas Initiative is an effort to have their own independent way of attracting capital. The United States is participating in the Three Seas. We are not a member, but we are participating and providing resources for the fund that is being developed that would be leveraged for these type of investments.

While we were in Bulgaria, we had a chance to have bilateral meetings. There were 12 Heads of state there. We had bilateral meetings with the President of Poland, Bulgaria, Latvia, and Romania. We had very constructive discussions about what is happening in their country.

We raised Helsinki issues with all these countries. Senator WICKER already talked about how we were welcomed by the Bulgarian leadership in regards to the imposition of the Magnitsky sanctions. We are heroes. They feel like they have a second chance to try to develop the type of anti-corruption mechanisms that they desperately need.

Our visit to Varna, which is on the Black Sea, was very educational to see how Russia is trying to dominate the Black Sea area and one of the reasons why they are so aggressive in Ukraine and the Crimea.

I think that was extremely helpful for us to understand the security risks and how we have to work with our NATO partners to protect the Black Sea area, particularly from the potential aggression—not potential—from the aggression of Russia.

Also in Bulgaria, we had a chance to visit a Roma village. It is not my first visit to a Roma village. I have visited over the years. It is a real tragic situation. The Roma population have been in Europe for centuries. They lived in communities for hundreds of years, yet they do not have property rights.

They have lived in their homes, and yet they do not have the opportunity to have their homes registered. And at any time, the government can come in and take away their property without compensation.

They rarely have reliable utilities.

The village we visited did not have water systems, so they had to use out-houses, et cetera. They had limited availability of fresh water. Their utility service is not reliable. And they go to segregated schools. They don't have the same employment opportunities.

So we, once again, will raise the rights of the Roma population as part of our commitment under the Helsinki Commission, and we are following up with the local officials to try to help in that regard.

Then, lastly, on our way back, we visited Norway. I learned a lot because I did not know about the pre-positioning program. I know my friend Senator WICKER already knew about this from his Armed Services service, but it is where we pre-position equip-

ment so that we can respond rapidly to a circumstance anywhere in the world. The Norway pre-positioning is actually used to help us in regard to the Middle East and our needs in the Middle East.

So it was an extremely, extremely, I think, productive visit to these countries. I think we did carry out our commitment under the Helsinki Commission, and we advanced American values. I think we represented our country well, and we were very well noticed.

With that, I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Mississippi.

Mr. WICKER. Madam President, one other thing that our colleagues might not understand about the OSCE is their role in election observation.

As we were leaving Sofia on the morning of July 11, we crossed paths with some other representatives from the OSCE from European countries who were there to observe the parliamentary elections being held in Bulgaria that very day. Also, on the same day, Moldova, another member of the OSCE, was having parliamentary elections.

We have every hope that the results of these elections will be a further resolve in those two nation members to counter the corruption at the highest level, and we want to congratulate both of those member states of the OSCE for free and fair elections in Europe.

With that, I thank my colleague.

I yield the floor.

Mr. CARDIN. Madam President, I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ELECTIONS

Mr. BARRASSO. Madam President, I come to the floor to talk about the need for integrity in our elections.

On Monday, the Democrats on the Rules Committee took a field trip. The Democrats went to Georgia. They continued their efforts there to start a panic about election laws. Now, I am sure they will take more field trips in the months ahead. Taking over State election laws seems to be the Democrats' No. 1 priority. It was their No. 1 bill in the House, H.R. 1. It was their No. 1 bill in the Senate, S. 1. The Democrats claim that they are only responding to reforms passed in the States, and they say it is just the reforms passed in the States this year. Yet the election takeover bills that the Democrats have introduced were first drafted years ago. It is not in response to anything.

Don't let the Democrats kid you. It is an attack on States' rights and an attempt to stack the deck. After Democrats took over Washington, they rushed this takeover bill right through

the House of Representatives, with NANCY PELOSI at the helm. Then they tried to rush a similar bill through the Senate, and they failed. Senator SCHUMER continues to say the Democrats will try again.

At the State level, most recently in Texas, the Democrats are obstructing the democratic process in order to block election reforms from becoming law. Rather than allow an election reform bill to pass, Texas Democrats fled the State. They took private jets to Washington, DC. They hobnobbed with the Vice President, and they hobnobbed with the Speaker of the House and with many Democratic Senators. They sent out a lot of fundraising emails in the process, and they did a lot of television interviews. They took a lot of pictures of themselves, published them on social media, and told everyone they were making a heroic effort. They said it was a sacrifice.

Well, six of the Democrats became infected with the coronavirus. Then they spread the virus. It wasn't enough they infected each other; they spread the virus to staffers at the White House and here on Capitol Hill. It was a political stunt, and it turned into a coronavirus superspreader event, and I am sure they still consider themselves heroes. The hypocrisy is astonishing.

In the name of the democratic process, they actually blocked the democratic process, disregarded the will of the voters, and shut down the function of State government. They took a joyride on a private jet and endangered the health of many others. They believe in winning at any cost, and they put democracy in second place. This whole stunt is not about voter rights; it is about power. The Democrats are going to keep trying to keep the panic alive.

President Biden went to Philadelphia last week, and he spread even more falsehoods about the law. Now, I can understand why President Biden is doing everything he can to change the subject from the failures of his current administration. We have an open southern border that Americans are very disturbed about; we have surging violence in Democratic cities in the streets; and we have rising inflation that is hitting every family in America. Of course, President Biden doesn't want to talk about his one failure after another after another. So, instead, he throws rhetorical grenades at the Republicans, and he tells stories.

The Democrats' scare tactics on State voting laws are not going to work.

Their claims are false, and they have been repeatedly disproved.

The American people are finding out what is in the Democrats' election bills, and they do not like it. It is not pretty. It is ballot harvesting, which people reject. It is automatic voter registration, which many, many reject. It is taxpayer funding of political activities and campaigns, which Americans reject. It is giving the vote to felons on parole, which Americans reject.

It is 800 pages of mandates, which Americans hate, and it is banning voter ID laws nationwide at a time when voters across the country from both parties, all political persuasions, think voter ID laws are critical to ballot integrity and security. The more the American people find out what is in these bills, the more they oppose them.

You know, it has never been easier to vote in the United States. You take a look at the statistics from this past election year, never been easier. The American people know it.

American people support common-sense laws, which make it easier to vote and harder to cheat, but they do not support the Democrats' radical election takeover.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Louisiana.

BORDER SECURITY

Mr. CASSIDY. Madam President, we are seeing record numbers of people coming to the U.S. Mexican border. I am told 63 different countries have folks that have arrived at our border.

In the latest numbers released by the U.S. Customs and Border Protection, CBP, they encountered almost 190,000 people coming to the United States illegally through the southern border last month. That is the highest monthly number of encounters by CBP in two decades.

This is where we are now. That number is up 471 percent from June 2020. Across the board, every category of CBP encounter at the southwest land border—single adults, unaccompanied children, individuals in a family unit—they are surging in 2021, including in the hot summer months, when it has traditionally been that is when it falls. It is important because these people coming across in the hot summer months are at increased risk for death from dehydration and heat exhaustion.

With June's tally, CBP's migrant encounters surpassed 1 million for the fiscal year.

Now, in context, the last fiscal year had 460,000 encounters; fiscal year 2019, 980,000. That year was labeled a humanitarian catastrophe. That was for the entire year. Now, we are speaking of 1 million, and we have 3 months left to go in this fiscal year.

On Monday, Texas and the national media broadcast videos of migrants trying to force their way past Texas border guards. Eight Federal agents and police officers pushed back on the gate to prevent a rush of about 300 people just breaking through, coming across the border from Mexico.

By any definition, this is a crisis—for the individual, who is at risk of dying of dehydration in the desert; for our country, which cannot control the border crisis; for the infection of the COVID and coronavirus situation in our country, because, obviously, coronavirus could be rampant among these folks.

The Biden-Harris administration could not be doing worse if they inten-

tionally set out to mismanage the situation. This past weekend, it became clear that it is not just a situation on the border, but it is also a situation in Louisiana.

On Friday, KTBS, a Shreveport news outlet, reported that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement—ICE—dropped off approximately 80 Haitian immigrants with little or no warning to local government and law enforcement officials.

And, again, this is multiple levels. I presume that these folks are dropped off because we are out of capacity, but let's think about the individual being dropped off. A source told KTBS that the men had money, but some of the women had little or no money—no contacts, no money, they don't speak the language, dropped off in a strange city.

Multiple Louisiana outlets are reporting approximately 400 immigrants from 42 countries have been dropped off by ICE in Shreveport since the end of March, but this is the first we heard. In Baton Rouge, WBRZ, the ABC affiliate, had photos and video of a similar drop-off in Baton Rouge on Friday, July 16. Monroe, LA, had a similar situation; Natchez, MS, similar as well.

We called ICE over the weekend, and yesterday, they—we actually spoke to the acting director. He told me the dropoffs are “not our common practice.” I would argue that releasing migrants without notifying local officials—at least the NGOs that can give them help, particularly when there isn't—when some of them have no money, no contacts, no place to go, is not good. And he acknowledged that. In fairness, he acknowledged that that was a mistake and that the number of 70 was too large a number.

He denied that it was a problem of capacity, but, frankly, when we see what is happening at the southern border and then we see a whole group of 70 being dropped off without the organization required to make sure there is seamless entry into our society, that tells me that there probably is a capacity problem.

Again, you cannot imagine a worse immigration policy and execution of what we have seen in the first 6 months of this administration. It is incoherence; it is dysfunction. It appears that Washington told ICE: Just send them someplace with, again, little or no notice to State and local officials.

We have to ask: Does the President, does the Vice President care about controlling the border? Do they care about communities? Do they care about these immigrants? It is almost as if they are wishing that the issue be swept under the rug.

Unfortunately, the crisis continues to worsen. I don't know if there is a plan. I say that because if there is a plan, we have not yet seen it executed. What we have seen is that record numbers of people are now coming into our country. It is more as if hands are being thrown up in the air.

I will also say there was a lot of criticism of what President Trump did, but

it is my observation, whatever the last thing the last President did was the first thing that worked because it is not as if they tried the immediate solution first off. It is like they worked through some things that didn't work and they finally got to where they were able to stem the tide.

So if it is the era of “let's do the opposite of what President Trump did, even if it is the only thing that has ever worked,” we are in trouble.

I do think it is time for the Biden administration to admit they were wrong and to begin going back to that which appeared to work.

I want to thank the people of Shreveport. They have been kinder than the Federal Government in terms of helping people out—the churches, the NGOs that came out to help folks. As one of them said, the Scripture teaches us to help those who are aliens in our land.

They have been willing to handle the situation when the administration failed. But the charity of the American people is not a substitute for a coherent policy, and this is an issue for the executive branch, specifically President Biden and Vice President Harris, who was personally put in charge.

We need to get it right. We need answers. We need accountability. We need sound immigration and border policies, and it starts with securing our southern border and enforcing our laws.

Again, the current situation is unfair to everyone—the migrants, the community, our country. The situation in Shreveport, Monroe, and Baton Rouge shows the failure of the policies. I don't think they are the only communities dealing with this, and we will continue to deal with it even more so until we have a controlled border.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. OSSOFF). Without objection, it is so ordered.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. SMITH. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to legislative session and be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

NSCAI REPORT

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that I may place into the RECORD a portion of the final report by the National Security Commission on Artificial Intelligence,